**Grammar Mini-Lesson: The Apostrophe**

**Definition:**

The apostrophe is a punctuation mark that can be used to show missing letters in contractions as well as indicate possession in nouns. It is also used to form the plural of letters or words being referred to as letters or words, and to form the plural of abbreviations and numbers (Ruvinsky, 2009, p. 154).

**Grade Level Targeted:**

The grade level being targeted in this lesson is grade nine. The misuse of the apostrophe is a problem that is seen throughout all grades and so it is both helpful and beneficial for students to review the proper use of the apostrophe at the beginning of their high school years. By re-introducing how to use the apostrophe in grade nine students will be prevented from repeating the misuse of this punctuation into their intermediate years when grammar becomes integral to their success in writing.

**Common errors and corrections:**

Common errors students usually make when using the apostrophe include attempts to show that a word is plural rather than possessive. For example, a student may spell goat plural as goat’s instead of goats. Also because a student may feel that a noun such as a name (Emilia) is not plural in a sentence they may not place an apostrophe before the s when it is possessive. For example a student may write Emilias dog instead of Emilia’s dog because they are unaware or have forgotten that an apostrophe shows the possessive and not plural. This confusion between the possessive and the plural may come from the rule of adding an apostrophe and –s to form the possessive of some indefinite pronouns such as anybody, one and somebody. As these are not nouns students may become confused and may begin to think that the apostrophe is used to show the plural.

**Activity:**

The activity will focus on the possessive apostrophe and contractions.

Part 1: students will change the underlined words in each sentence to show the possessive form.

Part 2: students will fill in the blank, converting the word into a contraction. The sentence above will have the word that needs to be converted.

Part 3: this part of the exercise will challenge the student to practice part one and two together. Students will be required to fill in the blanks using only contractions and possessive nouns. At the teacher’s discretion this can be done individually, in partners or can be assigned for homework to be taken up the following class.

**Resources:**

Ruvinsky, Maxine. (2009). *Practical Grammar: A Canadian Writer’s Resource.* Ontario: Oxford UP.

Inman, Mathew. (2012). The Oatmeal: How To Use An Apostrophe. Retrieved from:

http://theoatmeal.com/comics/apostrophe

Benner, Margaret L. and Towson University. 2011. Online Writing Support: Punctuation. Retrieved from:

http://www.towson.edu/ows/punct2.htm#apostrophe

**Let’s practice using the apostrophe!**

**Part One:** fill in the underlined part of the sentence using the sentence above it in order to show the correct possessive form.

1. The friend of her sister rides a bike

Her friend rides a bike.

1. The Glass on the window needs to be replaced.

The glass needs to be replaced.

1. Katherine brought her car in to the mechanic.

car was brought to the mechanic.

1. I liked the shirt on Niruban.

I liked shirt.

1. The cat was playing with a toy until the little boy took it.

The little boy took the toy.

**Part B:** change the underlined word into a contraction

1. It is very cold outside today.

cold outside.

1. I cannot see the color of the car driving this way.

I see the color of the car driving this way.

1. I should not ever give up when something is difficult.

I ever give up when something is difficult.

**Grammar Challenge!**

Fill in the blanks below using only contractions and possessive nouns.

English class is so much fun. Yesterday in class book fell on the floor and made a loud noise. I have laughed but the teacher jumped two feet back after hearing the noise. We started to continue with the lesson but I needed a pen so I borrowed pen. not sure what will happen tomorrow but I wait!